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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Rights of the child

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Summary

By paragraphs 9 and 51 (c) of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1 adopted by the Third Committee, the General Assembly would, respectively, welcome the efforts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to reform its working methods and decide to request the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to continue to submit reports to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

Implementation of the terms of the above decisions would entail additional requirements totalling $1,622,200 (gross) under section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services, section 24, Human rights, section 29E, Administration, Geneva, and section 34, Staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. This would represent a charge to the contingency fund and would therefore require additional appropriations for the biennium 2004-2005.

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1. At its 52nd meeting, on 23 November 2004, the Third Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1 by a recorded vote of 170 to 2, with 3 abstentions. Statements of programme budget implications of the draft resolution were submitted to the Committee in documents A/C.3/59/L.82 and A/C.3/59/82/Add.1, the contents of which are reproduced below for consideration by the Fifth Committee.

I. Committee on the Rights of the Child (A/C.3/59/L.82/Add.1)

A. Introduction

2. Under the terms of operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1, the General Assembly would welcome the efforts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to reform its working methods so as to consider the reports of States parties in a timely manner, including by the proposal to work in two chambers, as an exceptional and temporary measure, for a period of two years, in order to clear the backlog of reports, taking due account of equitable geographical distribution, and would urge the Committee to continue to review its working methods in order to enhance its efficiency and to assess progress after two years, also taking into account the wider context of treaty body reform.

3. The related decision of the Committee on the Rights of the Child is contained in its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.[1] Under the terms of its decision, the Committee will consider the reports of States parties in two parallel chambers, each consisting of nine members of the Committee, taking due account of equitable geographical distribution, thereby increasing the number of States parties' reports to be examined from 27 to 48 a year.

4. At its thirty-seventh session, in September 2004, the Committee reaffirmed its decision adopted at its thirty-fourth session and agreed that it should be implemented from the pre-sessional working group for its forty-first session, which would take place from 3 to 7 October 2005. During 2006, the Committee would meet for two weeks of each three-week session in parallel working groups and in parallel working groups for the duration of each of its three one-week pre-sessional working groups.

5. In paragraph 51 (d) of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to invite the Chairman of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to present an oral report on the work of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

B. Relationship of the proposed request to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

6. The activities to be carried out would relate to programme 19, Human rights, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and section 24, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

C. Modification of the approved programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

7. In order to reflect the provisions of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1, the narrative of subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights bodies and organs, of section 24, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, paragraph 24.43 (viii), Committee on the Rights of the Child, would be modified to read as follows:

"(a) Substantive servicing of meetings: pre-sessional working group (70)"

D. Estimates of resource requirements

8. The implementation of the request contained in operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution would entail requirements for the biennium 2004-2005, as detailed in table 1 below. These requirements would need to be met through additional appropriations by the General Assembly.

Table 1
Additional regular budget requirements
(United States dollars)

	2005	*2006*
Section 2. General Assembly affairs and conference services		
Conference services	484 900	3 878 700
Section 29E. Administration, Geneva		
Sound technician	2 400	21 600
Section 24. Human rights		
General temporary assistance	214 900	214 900
Grand total	**702 200**	**4 115 200**

9. The total full cost of the additional regular budget requirements for 2006 is $4,115,200, as shown in the table above. It is anticipated that these requirements will be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

10. The implementation of the request contained in operative paragraph 51 (d) of the draft resolution would entail a requirement of $3,000. It is envisaged that this requirement would be funded from extrabudgetary resources.

II. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/C.3/59/L.82)

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

11. Under operative paragraph 51 (c) of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1, the General Assembly would decide to request the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to continue to submit reports to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights and to ensure that they contain relevant, accurate and objective information on the situation of children affected by armed conflict, taking into account the views of Member States and the outcome document adopted by the General Assembly at its special session on children and bearing in mind existing mandates and reports of relevant bodies.

B. Background

12. In its resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996, the General Assembly recommended that the Secretary-General appoint for a period of three years a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children. The Assembly also called upon States and institutions concerned to provide voluntary contributions in support of the work of the Special Representative. The Secretary-General appointed the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in September 1997. The scope of responsibilities of the Special Representative was described in documents A/51/306 and Add.1.

13. On 6 January 1998, the Secretary-General established the Trust Fund for Children and Armed Conflict. As start-up contributions to the Trust Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provided $100,000 and $50,000, respectively. Since its inception, the Office of the Special Representative has been financed by voluntary contributions.

14. In paragraph 37 of its resolution 51/77, the General Assembly requested the Special Representative to submit to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights an annual report containing relevant information on the situation of children affected by armed conflict, bearing in mind existing mandates and reports of relevant bodies. Since 1996, in a number of its resolutions, the General Assembly has reiterated this request, while welcoming the continuing support for and voluntary contributions to the work of the Special Representative in the fulfilment of his mandate.

15. In its resolutions 54/149 of 17 December 1999, and 57/190 of 18 December 2002, the General Assembly recommended that the Secretary-General extend the mandate of the Special Representative for a further period of three years. In paragraph 3 of resolution 57/190, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the scope and effectiveness of the United Nations system response, including recommendations for strengthening, mainstreaming, integrating and sustaining those activities.

16. In its resolution 58/245 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly decided that the activities under the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict would be supported through regular budget funding. Before the adoption of that resolution, the Fifth Committee had decided to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the resolution, any appropriations necessary would be considered in the context of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General in pursuance of section V of General Assembly resolution 57/190 (see A/58/652).

17. The report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive assessment of the United Nations system response to children affected by armed conflict (A/59/331) was issued on 3 September 2004. In that report, the Secretary-General provided, inter alia, recommendations for strengthening the United Nations system response to children affected by armed conflict.

C. Current administrative and financial situation

18. As stated in paragraph 70 of the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General, more recently, donors have not been contributing funds and the available resources are expected to be exhausted by the end of 2004. Therefore, it is not expected that sufficient extrabudgetary resources will be available to maintain the Office of the Special Representative beyond 31 December 2004.

19. Based on the most recent expenditure data, it is estimated that, at the end of 2004, the balance of extrabudgetary resources for children and armed conflict activities would amount to approximately $690,000, including some $540,000 contributed and earmarked for specific activities. The balance of unearmarked resources as at 31 December 2004 would amount to $150,000. It is not possible at this stage to provide a definitive estimate of voluntary contributions for 2005. It could, however, be determined that the Office would not have sufficient extrabudgetary resources to operate through 2005.

D. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented

20. The continuation of reporting to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of children affected by armed conflict, requested in paragraph 51 (c) of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1, falls under the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, namely paragraph 37 of General Assembly resolution 51/77. Since the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/190, extended the mandate of the Special Representative for a further period of three years, necessary support is to be provided for effective performance of his mandate for one more year. In this regard, necessary resources should be identified in order to further maintain in 2005 the Office of the Special Representative, which has been responsible, inter alia, for the preparation of these reports for the past six years.

E. Administrative and financial arrangements and indication of additional requirements

21. The annual cost of the activities of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict is estimated at $950,000 net of staff assessment. In accordance with the new streamlined structure specified in the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive assessment (A/59/331), the Office would comprise, in addition to the post of the Special Representative, a staff of four Professionals, including a Senior Adviser (P-5); two Professional staff (P-4) responsible for day-to-day relations with United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations, as well as for assisting in the preparation of reports; one Professional staff member (P-3) responsible for outreach and public information

and three support staff (1 General Service (Principal level) and 2 General Service (Other level)). The cost of these eight temporary posts would amount to $750,000. The Office of the Special Representative would also be provided with adequate resources to cover field visits and other cooperation and coordination trips, consultancies and other office operations, commensurate with the streamlined structure and functions ($200,000). Table 2 below provides information on the estimated resource requirements by object of expenditure.

Table 2
Resource requirements for 2005

	United States dollars
Staff salaries	750 000
Supplementary conference services	10 000
Other personnel services	8 000
Consultants and experts	55 000
Travel	45 000
Contractual services	30 000
Hospitality	2 000
Operating expenses	25 000
Supplies and materials	5 000
Furniture and equipment	20 000
Total	**950 000**

22. The balance of unearmarked extrabudgetary resources of $150,000 indicated in paragraph 19 above would be sufficient to cover the operational requirements of the Office, such as consultancies, travel, contractual services and part of the operating expenses. In order to maintain the Office through December 2005, the additional provision of $800,000 (net) would need to be funded from the regular budget for the biennium 2004-2005 under section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination. In addition, it is estimated that $120,000 would be required under section 34, Staff assessment, to be offset by the same amount under income from staff assessment. Any possibility of further reducing the proposed regular budget financing through additional extrabudgetary resources could only be defined at a later stage, upon availability of further information on potential sources of voluntary contributions. Subject to the review of the mandate of the Special Representative by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, funding of the Office beyond 2005 would be contingent upon availability of voluntary contributions.

III. Potential for absorption in the biennium 2004-2005

23. There are no resources provided under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 that could be made available to implement the requests contained in paragraphs 9 and 51 (c) of draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1 for the support of the efforts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to reform its working methods and for the operations of the Office of the Special Representative

of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in the biennium 2004-2005. Any amount that the General Assembly may decide to allocate for these activities would need, therefore, to be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2004-2005 in the context of operations of the contingency fund.

IV. Contingency fund

24. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditure derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditure were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

25. It is not possible at this stage to identify activities under section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services, section 24, Human rights, and section 29E, Administration, Geneva, that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the current biennium in order to meet the related additional requirements.

V. Summary

26. **Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.3/59/L.29/Rev.1, additional resource requirements of $1,622,200,000 (gross) would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, as detailed in table 3 below. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require a related increase in appropriations for the biennium 2004-2005. The provision under section 34, Staff assessment ($120,000), would be offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.**

Table 3
Additional resource requirements, 2004-2005

	United States dollars
Section 1. Overall policy-making, direction and coordination	800 000
Section 2. General Assembly affairs and conference services	484 900
Section 24. Human rights	214 900
Section 29E. Administration, Geneva	2 400
Section 34. Staff assessment	120 000
Total	**1 622 200**

27. **The requirements of $4,115,200 for 2006 in connection with the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child will be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.**

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 41* (A/59/41), para. 26; see also chap. I.C.